

VISIT...

LANZAROTE  
*Caliente*.COM

# STEPHEN KING THE SHAW



**MARVEL**  
LIMITED SERIES  
1 of 5  
PARENTAL ADVISORY

## Hardcases

AGUIRRE-SACASA

PERKINS

MARTIN

# STEPHEN KING THE STAND

**Creative Director & Executive Director: STEPHEN KING**

**Script: ROBERTO AGUIRRE-SACASA**

**Art: MIKE PERKINS**

**Color Art: LAURA MARTIN**

**Lettering: VC'S RUS WOOTON**

**Cover: TOMM COKER WITH LAURA MARTIN**

**Production: IRENE Y. LEE**

**Assistant Editor: CHARLIE BECKERMAN**

**Consulting Editors: MICHAEL HORWITZ & BILL ROSEMAN**

**Senior Editor: RALPH MACCHIO**

**Vice President of Creative: TOM MARVELLI**

**Senior Vice President of Publishing Sales: DAVID GABRIEL**

**Senior Vice President of Strategic Development: RUWAN JAYATILLEKE**

**Editor in Chief: JOE QUESADA**

**Publisher: DAN BUCKLEY**

**Special Thanks to CHUCK VERRILL, MARSHA DEFILIPPO, BRIAN STARK, JIM NAUSEDAS,  
JIM MCCANN, ARUNE SINGH, LAUREN SANKOVITCH and JEFF SUTER.**

**For more information on THE STAND comics, visit: [MARVEL.COM/COMICS/THE\\_STAND](http://MARVEL.COM/COMICS/THE_STAND)  
To find MARVEL COMICS at a local comic and hobby shop, go to [www.comicshoplocator.com](http://www.comicshoplocator.com)  
or call 1-866-COMICBOOK.**

THE STAND: HARDGASER No. 1, August, 2010. Published Monthly by MARVEL WORLDWIDE, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT LLC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018. © 2010 Stephen King. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Stephen King. Published by arrangement with The Doubleday Broadway Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc. This comic series is produced under license from The Doubleday Broadway Publishing Group and Stephen King. Marvel and its logos are TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. \$3.99 per copy in the U.S. (US\$4.99/£3.99/€3.99) in the direct market; with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. \$1.99 per copy in the U.S. (US\$2.99/£1.99/€1.99) in the direct market. Canadian Agreement #0606037. Printed in the USA. ALAN FINE, EVP, Chief of the President, Marvel Worldwide, Inc. and EVP & COO Marvel Characters & V. DAN BUCKLEY, Chief Executive Officer and Publisher - Print, Animation & Digital Media. JIM SOKOLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer. DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation. DAVID BOSART, SVP of Business Affairs & Brand Management. MICHAEL PASCUCCI, VP of Merchandising & Communications. JIM GRIFF, VP of Operations & Logistics. DAN CARL, Executive Director of Publishing Technology. JUSTIN F. GABRIEL, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations. SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager. STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Ron Stern, VP of Business Development, at [rtstern@marvel.com](mailto:rtstern@marvel.com). For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-6156.

## PREVIOUSLY IN THE STAND

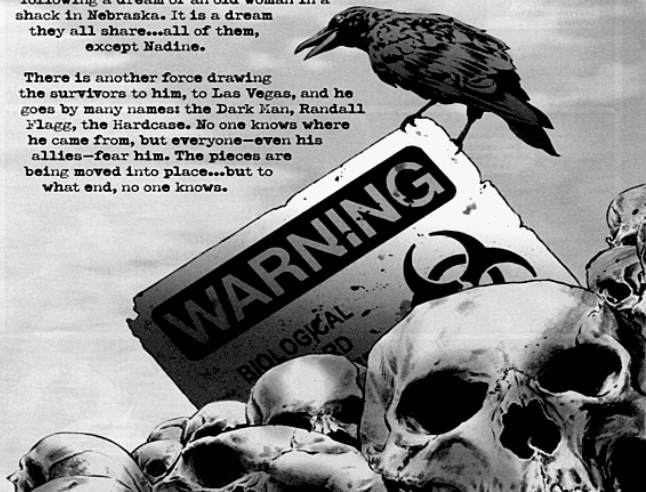
Two months ago, something happened at Project Blue in California. Within weeks, a flu-like virus—"Captain Trips"—swept through the world, killing 99% of the population. Now, it's up to the survivors to piece together a new life in a world that has moved on.

Three rag-tag groups have started to pick their way West. Nick Andros, a deaf-mute who lost an eye during the last gasping throes of Captain Trips, has met up with Abigail Freemantle, a 108-year-old woman in Nebraska. With him are Ralph Brentner, Dick Ellis, and the man-child Tom Cullen, with half a dozen others, and all together, they are heading to Colorado.

Frannie Goldsmith and Harold Lautner have connected with Glen Bateman and Stu Redman, and they too are making their way to Nebraska to meet up with the woman they've come to know in their dreams as Mother Abigail. However, tension is brewing in the group, as Stu and Frannie have struck up a romance, much to the chagrin of Harold...

Larry Underwood traveled alone for a while, until he met up with Nadine Cross and a boy, Joe, who doesn't speak. They have met others, and they are following a dream of an old woman in a shack in Nebraska. It is a dream they all share...all of them, except Nadine.

There is another force drawing the survivors to him, to Las Vegas, and he goes by many names: the Dark Man, Randall Flagg, the Hardcase. No one knows where he came from, but everyone—even his allies—fear him. The pieces are being moved into place...but to what end, no one knows.





**MEANWHILE.**  
**INTERSTATE 15.**

The man who was once Donald Merwin Elbert, now Trashcan Man forever and ever, beheld the fabled City, Seven in One...



*Gibola. The City that is Promised. The City of Dreams.*



I'm coming...  
I'll do whatever  
you want...

My  
life for  
you...



His body, a broken, burnt wreck, as mad as a hatter from walking through God's frying pan with no rest and no water, Trashy began to dance.





Tonight, he thought, he would drink from the waters of Cibola, and they would taste like wine.



And then he would find him, the man who had bade him across the plains and mountains and, finally, into the desert.

He who is--the Park Man, the hardcase.



His were the armies of the night, his were the white-faced riders of the dead...

Soon, there would be things Trashcan cared for very little:

Shrieks and rapes, subjugation and murder--



I will set you high in my artillery. You are the man I want.



--but, also very soon, there would be a Great Burning.

And about that, Trashcan Man cared very much.

Cibola...

## A MONTH EARLIER...

The first dream had come to Trashcan Man in Gary, Indiana, after a mishap blowing up the town's oil tanks left him unconscious.



There had been a blinding white flare--

Then agony, as though he'd thrust his arm into an active volcano, churning lava--

He made it off the tank in one piece, barely, falling part of the way and landing on his arm, smothering the flames.

As he lost consciousness, he murmured:

Live by the torch, die...

...by...

...the...

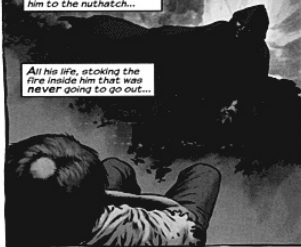


When the Park Man came to him, Trashy thought he had seen him before.

When the townies back in Powtanville catcalled at him...

When the sheriff had sent him to the nuthatch...

All his life, stoking the fire inside him that was never going to go out...



His was the face you could never quite see...

His were the hands that dealt spades from the death deck...

His was the grin from beyond the grave of the world...



The Park Man showed  
Trashy an America in  
flames...

And a rough beast of an army--ten-thousand  
raggle-taggle castoffs--driving east, into  
the mountains, with him riding atop a truck  
filled with jellied napalm...



Each person wore a dark stone  
about his or her neck, and in some  
of them was a red shape that might  
have been an Eye or a Key...

I...I'll do  
whatever  
you want.



I will  
set you to  
burn...

You must come  
west, to my city  
beyond the mountains,  
and all will be made  
clear to you.



Trashy woke up then,  
and all around him,  
Gary was burning.

It reminded him of a classic funnybook  
he had owned as a child, an adaptation  
of H.G. Wells's War of the Worlds.

No time to waste. Now that  
he had a purpose, Trashy  
needed to move...

...and when he saw a few other  
survivors stumbling out of Gary,  
he thought: Fools. In good  
time, you'll burn...



A black and white illustration of a man, Trashcan Man, lying on his side on a paved road. He is wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark pants. A bicycle is on the ground next to him, and a helmet is nearby. The scene is dark and gritty.

On July 4th, the day Larry Underwood discovered Rita Blakemoor had overdosed, Trashcan Man began riding a ten-speed.

He fell off twice that first day, once squarely on his burn, which he slathered in Vaseline and antiseptic to ward off gangrene.

A black and white illustration of a long bridge spanning a river. In the background, there are houses and a hot air balloon floating in the sky. The scene is peaceful but has a somber tone.

On July 8th, the day Nick and Tom saw buffalo grazing in Comanche County, Trashcan Man crossed the Mississippi into Iowa.

A black and white illustration of Trashcan Man riding a bicycle on a road. He is looking back over his shoulder. In the background, there are two cars parked on the side of the road.

On the fourteenth, he crossed the Missouri...

...and, for the first time since Gary, Trash suspected that God Himself might intervene between him and his destiny.

A black and white illustration of a hospital room. A man is lying in a hospital bed, looking weak. A gurney is in the foreground, and there is a lot of medical equipment and debris around.

He was in Nebraska, and there was something dreadfully wrong...

In Nebraska, at night, the Dark Man--his constant companion since Indiana--came to him no more.

A black and white close-up illustration of Trashcan Man's face. He is lying down, looking up with a pained or thoughtful expression. His skin appears to be covered in bandages or scars.

Instead, he began to dream about...

...an old woman?



*Singing songs Trashy vaguely knew.*

*Songs the mother of a boy named  
Donald Merwin Elbert used to sing  
while doing her housework.*



*He'd be peering at her, paralyzed  
with hate and fear, because all of  
a sudden, the woman would stop  
her singing and--*



*Weasel in  
the corn!*



*And he would look  
down to see--*



*And then he would  
scream himself awake--*

*Oh please get  
me away from her.  
I don't want no part  
of that old biddy,  
please, oh, please,  
get me out of  
Nebraska!*

Which is how Trashcan Man ended up crossing four hundred miles in three days, running mostly on high octane terror.



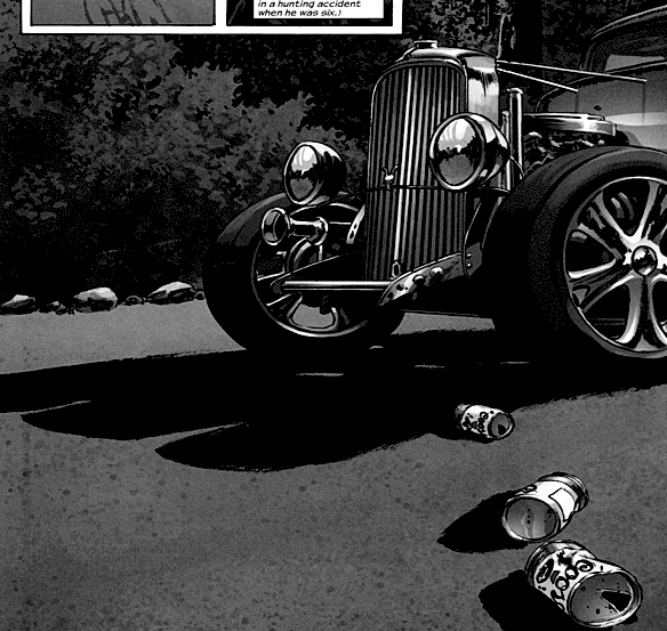
(For Mother Abigail's part, she awoke during the night of July 15-- just as Trashcan Man passed north of Hemmingford Home-- Full of fear and pity.)



(She thought she might have been dreaming about her grandson Andres, who'd been killed in a hunting accident when he was six.)

On July 18, southwest of Sterling, Colorado, a '32 Ford deuce coupe screeched to a halt right next to Trashy on Highway 34.

It, and its driver, were a sight to behold.





Hey,  
you all  
tall and  
oogly.



Hey, boy,  
whatchall  
say?



The only thing Trashcan  
could think of was:

I  
like your  
car.



*It was, perhaps, the only right thing to say.*

*Five minutes later, Trashy was riding shotgun as the deuce coupe accelerated to the Kid's cruising speed, 45 MPH.*



The call me the Kid. Outta Shreeport Looseyanna. This here beast won every major carshow award in the South. You believe that happy crappy...?

What they call you, boy?

The Trashcan Man.

Because I used to light fires in people's trashcans and mailboxes and stuff.



Didja? Boy, you sound crazy, but that's all right. I like crazy people.

I'm crazy myself.

*Almost as if to prove the point, they whizzed around a bend and just missed slamming into a overturned Belkins semi--*

*Skipped by the cab of the truck with a coat of paint to spare--*



*The Kid never turned a hair.*

No sense beatin' around the bush. I guess we're going to the same place. I guess you been getting dreams about that boogeyman in the black flight-suit, am I right?





JULY 18.

Trash and the Kid checked into adjoining rooms in a motel in Golden, Colorado.

BLAMMM!!!

The Kid, drunk on warm Coors, was in a mood...

No 'lectricity, no TV, don't I *hate* that... I *love* it that all the shithheads got wasted, but where's my HBO? Where's my Playboy Channel? Where's...?

...you dumb dork! You done spilt your Coors beer. I'd piss Coors beer if I could, and do you think they're making any more Coors beers these days, Trash?

N-no. Guess not.

You're damn right, it's a dangerous *spee-shees*.

I'm gonna ventilate your thinking-machine for being so wasteful, you believe that happy crappy?

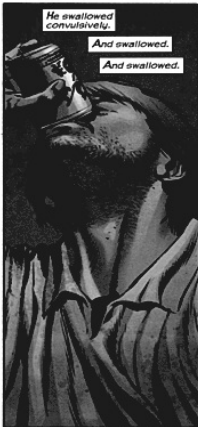
Trashcan Man did. He thought it was the end of his life, for sure.

I'll tell you what, Trashy. You get you another can of Coors, and you *chug* it. If you can chug the whole thing, I won't send you to the Cadillac Ranch.

Go on. Every drop. And if you puke it back up, you're a gone goose.



Warm beer gurgled out, into Trashy's throat.



He swallowed convulsively.

And swallowed.

And swallowed.



When the can was empty, and after a seemingly endless battle with his gorge, Trashy won his life back in one long--



Ah-hah HA!

Okay, not bad, Trashcan Man. Not too damn shabby...

**LATER.**

Trashy was in his room, making his plans. He would wait until the little monster had succumbed to sleep, then he would slip away. He'd had enough.

And what the kid had said about the dark priest...

Saying things like that, even if you were joking, was like holding your face up to a thunderstorm and begging the lightning to come hit--

Hey.

The Kid, a lot drunk.

We...we ain't done by a long shot yet.

I know what you like. I knew it the first time I looked at you...

Trashcan Man suspected what was coming next.

He suspected it from his long nights in the stir.

And as it happens...

...Trashy was right.

Mercifully, after it was over--  
after the kid had finished his  
business--sleep came.

And with sleep,  
a dream...



He was on a dark  
road, and very high.



Don't worry,  
I will give you  
a sign...

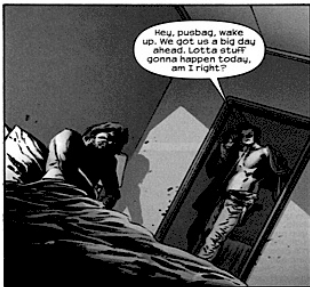
I will show you  
what happens to  
those who would  
set themselves  
against me.



Wait and  
watch, my  
good and  
faithful  
servant...



Hey, pusbag, wake  
up. We got us a big day  
ahead. Lotta stuff  
gonna happen today,  
am I right?

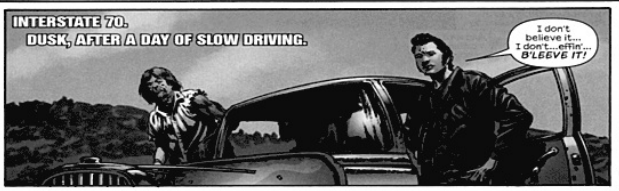


My life for yours...

S-sure  
hope you  
are.



**INTERSTATE 70.**  
**DUSK, AFTER A DAY OF SLOW DRIVING.**



I don't believe it...  
I don't...effin'...  
B'LEVEE IT!

GET OUTTA MY ROAD! YOU'RE ALL DEAD! Y'ALL BELONG IN THE BONEYARD. YOU GOT NO BUSINESS ON MY EFFIN' ROAD!



Colorado Rocky Mountain high, Trashcan Man thought, I've seen it raining Chevis in the sky...

And then he giggled.



That's it, I'm gonna kill you, Trashy--I'm gonna take your life--but first...

...first, you're gonna clear this mess for me.



C-clear...?  
All of...?



I'm not leaving my car, no way, no how.

Now you get pushing, Trashy, and you push fast enough, maybe I won't blow your brains out, you believe that happy crappy?

Trashy offered a silent prayer up to the Park Man...





Come on, ya  
wet end dummy,  
getcha back  
in it...



Pain flared in Trashy's  
recently burned arm; he  
knew that the fragile new  
tissue would soon rip...

The pain would  
become agony.



An impossible task.  
The kid would get bored  
soon, and then...



What  
the hell  
was  
that?



I didn't  
hear  
anyth--

Who's there?  
You better answer  
me or I start  
shooting!



*The Kid was answered, but  
not by a human voice.*

*By a howl that rose up like a  
hoarse siren, first climbing then  
dropping into a guttural growl.*

*They were coming down the slope  
on the far side of the turnpike and  
crossing the median.*



*The Kid emptied his  
.45s, but only dropped  
three wolves.*

*Three...of two  
dozen? More?*

**BLAMM!!**  
**BLAMM!!**  
**BLAMM!!**





*Their eyes, Trashy thought. They had the eyes of their Master...and his Master.*

*The Kid just made it into the Austin before the wolves pounced on him.*

*But that was all right. They could wait...forever.*



*Then one of the wolves was licking Trashy's burned hand...*



*My life for you...*



*The Kid's face was a small white moon, staring at him in disbelief.*

Trashy responded  
the only sane way.

You're shut down!  
Do you hear me? **DO YOU**  
**BELIEVE THAT HAPPY**  
**CRAPPY? SHUT DOWN!**  
**DON'T TELL ME, I'LL**  
**TELL YOU!**

That was it for the Kid. The Park Man's lapdogs  
would wait until he starved to death, or until he  
got crazy enough to try and make a run for it.

The wolf was gently tugging  
Trashcan's good hand now.  
Tugging him west.

All right.  
Okay, boy.

Let's  
go...

By the time Trashcan Man made it through the Eisenhower Tunnel, his gray-ghostly guardians had faded away. Almost...evaporated.

But it didn't matter. He had seen the Park Man's hand at work, had seen it plain, and he was too exalted to do anything but pray and keep moving.



The beauty of religious mania is that it has the power to explain everything.

Which is perhaps why (and how) Trashy spent twenty minutes talking to a crow on the road west of Vail, convinced it was an emissary of the Park Man...



...or the Park Man himself.



By late July, Trashy was speeding across western Utah on the I-15, which runs all the way to San Bernardino.



And when the front wheel of his bike parted company from the rest of the machine, and Trashy was pitched over the handlebars and split his head open, he kept walking, kept shuffling...

Gi-a-bo-la,  
my life for you,  
Gi-a-bola, bumpy,  
bumpy, bump...



And so it was almost dawn on the morning of August 5 when Trashcan Man, once Donald Merwin Elbert, entered Cibola, otherwise known as Vegas.

Missing a shoe he'd lost somewhere in the desert.



He saw many things, but he didn't stop until he reached the MGM Grand Hotel...



...or, more specifically, the working fountain in front of the hotel.



He could feel the pores of his body open like a million mouths and slurp the water in like a sponge.

Cibola! Cibola! My life for yours!



He dogpaddled around the fountain, and drank until he was sloshing around like a filled goatskin.

It had been worth it. It had all...been...



...Trash fell instantly asleep.



And was soon surrounded by a trio of men.

Ken DeMott:

What do we do with him?

Lloyd Henreid:

Let him sleep. Flagg wants him.

Hector Progan:

Yeah? Where the hell is Flagg, anyway?



# THE JOURNEY OF TRASHCAN MAN

START HERE -----

JULY 18, TRASHCAN MAN  
MEETS THE KID.

IDAHO

JULY 25, TRASHY'S BIKE  
FALLS APART, PITCHING  
HIM ONTO I-15. HE WILL  
WALK THE REST OF THE  
WAY.

JULY 19, THE KID IS  
ATTACKED BY WOLVES  
ALONG ROUTE 70, NEAR  
THE EISENHOWER  
TUNNEL.

NEVADA

UTAH

COLORADO

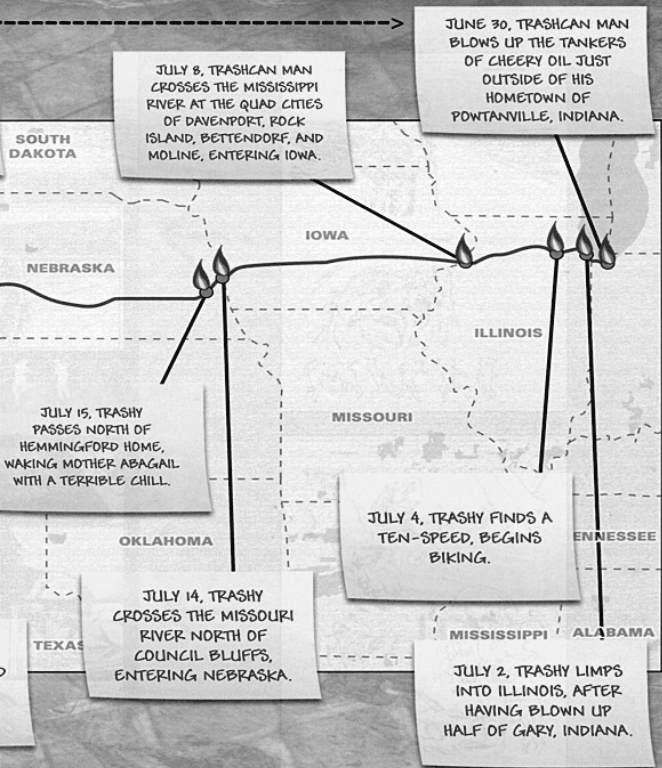
JULY 23, TRASHCAN  
MAN FINDS ANOTHER  
BIKE NEAR GRAND  
JUNCTION, CO

ARIZONA

NEW  
MEXICO

AUGUST 5, TRASHCAN  
MAN ENTERS LAS  
VEGAS.

JULY 18, THE KID AND  
TRASHCAN MAN SPEND  
A NIGHT IN GOLDEN,  
COLORADO.





**Art Evolution** See how the pages evolved from pencils to inks (by Mike Perkins) to colors (Laura Martin)...

**PAGE 1**

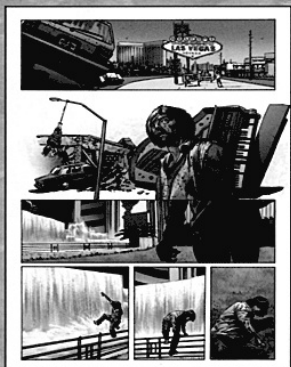


**PAGE 13**













Cover Sketches for the first issue by Tomm Coker



THE STRIPPER - B  
TOMM COKER



THE STRIPPER - B  
TOMM COKER

*Next: "I don't know, it's his order. Best not to ask questions  
when the hardcase is involved."*





"If you've got a fever for riveting graphic fiction based on the biggest pop novelist of all time, the prescription is more Captain Trips."

--Rachel Molino, WIZARD MAGAZINE



It's a new world now. The deadly plague named Captain Trips has finished its wildfire race across the nation, leaving the few individuals with natural immunities to clean up after the dead. Now, the survivors began to group into two factions: those who desire freedom, peace and liberty, and those who follow the Dark Man, a.k.a. Randall Flagg. They are the hardcases.

Based on the popular apocalyptic novel by celebrated author Stephen King, *The Stand* brings together critically acclaimed writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (*Sensational Spider-Man*, *Angel: Revelations*, HBO's *Big Love*) and the gritty visuals of artist Mike Perkins (*Captain America*) to tell a tale which begins at the end of the world.

PARENTAL ADVISORY

FOR STRONG LANGUAGE & CONTENT



\$3.99 US

WWW.MARVEL.COM

DIRECT EDITION

*Like it, buy it!*





*neverwhere*